

ABSTRACT

5           The present invention comprises the use of sulfite additives to reduce  
discoloration of L-ascorbic acid produced from acid or aqueous solutions of 2-keto-  
L-gulonic acid. In one aspect, the present invention comprises a continuous process  
for producing L-ascorbic acid from an aqueous solution of 2-keto-L-gulonic acid.  
The use of sulfite additives reduces product stream color and improves product  
10 recovery by binding to high molecular weight reaction by-products. In a continuous  
process, the reaction stream is separated from residual sulfite and sulfite-bound by-  
products to produce a product stream enriched in aqueous ascorbic acid for recovery,  
and an enriched 2-keto-L-gulonic acid stream which is recycled to the reactor. The  
*in situ* use of sulfite additives during the reaction increases the overall yield of L-  
15 ascorbic acid, with no loss in selectivity of the synthesis.

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